

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER: S121222/F

Land adj to Whitchurch Fire Station, Whitchurch, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire

CASE OFFICER: Mr D Thomas

DATE OF SITE VISIT:

Relevant Development Plan Policies:

Hfds. UDP:
S1 Sustainable development;
S2 Development requirements;
S3 Housing;
S7 Natural an historic heritage;
DR1 Design;
DR2 Land use and activity;
DR3 Movement;
DR5 Planning obligations;
DR13 Noise;
H7 Housing in the countryside outside settlements;
H9 Affordable housing;
H10 Rural exception housing;
LA1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
LA2 Landscape character and areas least resilient to change; and
LA6 Landscaping schemes

National Planning Policy Framework

Relevant Site History:

DCSE2004/4025/O Single dwelling. Refused 17.1.2005.
Appeal dismissed 12.7.2005

CONSULTATIONS

	Consulted	No Response	No objection	Qualified Comment	Object
Parish Council	X				X
Traffic Manager	X			X	
Landscape Officer	X			X	
Environmental Health	X		X		
Housing	X		X		
Planning Obligations Manager	X	X			
Neighbour letter and site notice	X			X	X (4)
Local Member	X		X		

PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL:

Site description and proposal:

The site is located on the south east side of Whitchurch, adjacent to the existing fire station and a roundabout. There is other housing on the opposite side of the road and a primary school beyond the roundabout. The site fronts onto the B4164. There is access into the site which is close to the fire station.

The site is within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The landscape character type is Principal Settled Farmlands, although the site itself is characterised by the surrounding roads, existing development and some boundary trees.

This is an application for full planning permission for the construction of 2 semi-detached dwellings that will provide 4, 3 bedroom dwellings to provide low cost housing.

Representations:

Neighbours have been notified and a site notice has been posted. Objections have been received from:

P Walshe – e-mail;
Mrs E Cox, Falklands Villa, Whitchurch;
Mrs E Woodward, Torwood, Whitchurch; and
C Woodward, 6 Ridgeway Crescent, Whitchurch:

In summary it is said:

- I object on access this is a very busy junction and often there are cars parked on both sides of the road and also any extra development in the future when the village school opens and closes often blocking accesses to existing dwellings anything which puts any extra pressure on this junction is dangerous also any future development of the site would exacerbate the problem.
- Access to the properties is very dangerous as it is extremely close to the road coming from the flyover and visibility is limited. - concern about this only being partial development of the site.
- If permission is given it sets a precedent for future development and this piecemeal approach does not promote good, appropriate planning for the village - the design of the houses is poor.
- This is the approach to the village and Symonds Yat West, is ANOB, from the A40, and requires, if development is allowed, a more sympathetic, aesthetically pleasing design.

Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade, 2 Kings Court, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester has commented:

"Proximity of access to identified site to our emergency egress route.

We would ask that adequate measures are put in place to ensure that any potential Health and Safety risks caused due to the proximity of the proposed access route, and the Fire Station's egress route is not at any point compromised. It is of paramount importance that emergency egress is not impeded during the construction stage or following completion and that appropriate and effective measures are designed to remove such risks. We would suggest that one such measure could be relocating the proposed access further away from the existing access/egress route of the fire station.

Noise disturbance

The Fire Station can be operational / accessed at any point and this necessitates vehicles using our site over a 24 hour period. This includes a degree of unavoidable processes resulting in noise, such

as alarms, vehicle movements etc. We would strongly recommend therefore that the siting and acoustic performance of the proposed dwellings is appropriately designed and suggest that a correctly specified acoustic fence is erected and a Condition placed that this is maintained into the future.”

Whitchurch PC: “feel there is insufficient information regarding design and access statement and unless there is further information submitted would then object to this application. They also have concerns regarding the additional sewage created by this development.”

Traffic Manager: Further information required; traffic speeds and volume of traffic.

Landscape Officer accepts the orientation and scale of the buildings is appropriate to the site, ideally this design development should be explained in a design and access statement. The buildings will be outer masonry brickwork, but, other than the fire station house, other houses close to the site are not brick – stone opposite and render on the opposite side of the dual carriageway. I am concerned about the alterations in levels required for the retaining wall between the buildings and the impact this might have on the existing boundary hedgerow.

Housing Officer supports the application.

Environmental Health Officer has no objection.

Pre-application discussion:

Yes.

Constraints:

Housing in the countryside. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Appraisal:

As part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan (Core Strategy) a Strategic Housing Land Review (SHLAA) has been undertaken, updated in March 2012 and published on the Council's website. The SHLAA is an assessment of the potential availability of land for housing across Herefordshire up to the end of the plan period and in the original assessment, published in October 2009

With regard to decision taking, coupled with the latest Annual Monitoring Report, published in June 2012, the SHLAA alludes to the fact that Herefordshire Council does not have a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites. This means that the Council's policies on the supply of housing are in conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which is a material consideration in the determination of applications - paragraph 49 of the NPPF is clear that housing supply policies will be usurped by the framework where they are in conflict with national policy.

Having regard to the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) the site is located outside the identified boundary of Whitchurch as shown on Inset Map 44: Whitchurch in the UDP. For the purpose of planning policy land that is located outside settlement boundaries is considered as being located in the countryside.

Policy H7: *Housing in the countryside outside settlements* restricts residential development in the open countryside to certain, specified exceptions. One of these is rural exception housing in accordance with policy H10. Policy H10 is subject to the following:

- The scheme will contribute to meeting a proven genuine and quantifiable local need for affordable housing as ascertained from an up-to-date local affordable housing needs survey. In the case of a single affordable dwelling, clear evidence of a long-term local need will be required;
- It is evident that local housing conditions could not otherwise satisfy the need;
- The scheme respects both the character and size of the settlement concerned and the identified scale of need;
- Arrangements are made to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing, for single dwellings as well as larger schemes, will be enjoyed in perpetuity by subsequent occupants in local need as well as by the initial occupiers;
- The site's location affords reasonable access to facilities and where possible public transport;
- Proposals do not involve mixed developments consisting of open market housing to offset the lower return on affordable housing on the same site; and
- In settlements other than Kington (policy H2), the main villages (policy H4) or smaller settlements (policy H6) the proposal is limited to the construction of a single affordable dwelling which does not exceed the dwelling and plot size limits set in policy H6 unless clear evidence is provided to indicate a need exists for a larger dwelling.

With regard to housing need the Council's Strategic Housing Service undertook a housing needs study in the parishes of Whitchurch and Ganarew; these parishes form a group within Kerne Bridge ward. The survey concluded the survey found 11 households who would be likely to require affordable housing in Whitchurch & Ganarew during the next 2 years, and a further 5 households who wish to buy with a mortgage but, from their response on the form, will not be able to afford property in these parishes. Having established a housing need, proposals for exception schemes need to be located in or adjacent to an established rural settlement. As mentioned, the site is located outside the main village boundary of Whitchurch. However, it is located close to the village primary school, with housing on the opposite side of the B4164; Old Court Hotel is to the southeast and employment opportunities further along the B4164. Also, the site is within walking distance of the village shop, village hall and the Crown Hotel which are located to the north of the site on opposite side of the A40. There is also a subway under the A40 which at the time of my site visit was closed to pedestrians. These facilities are within 2km walking distance from the site along a paved route. As such the site is considered a sustainable location. Consequently, the case officer considers the proposal complies with the exceptions policy and can be considered a suitable location for an affordable housing scheme.

The application proposes the erection of 4 semi-detached dwellings that will back onto the B4164. It is proposed to orientate the dwellings so that they will look out towards the entrance so as not to cause overlooking of nearby dwellings. Although, the design and appearance of the dwellings are modest they are to be constructed with brick elevations under a slate roof. This part of Whitchurch is characterised by a mix of building types and materials with housing dating from the late C19 up to a mid 1970's dwelling on the west side of the fire station which probably dates from the same period. There is also a good mix building materials; brick, stone and render and clay roof tiles as well as concrete roof tiles and slate. The proposal is for the provision of affordable housing which in itself is constrained by construction costs. Although the Conservation Manager - Landscape Officer is sceptical of the choice of building materials, the dwellings will only be glimpsed when passing the site due to the orientation of the properties. The gables to units 1 and 2 facing will be seen from the

5. C95

6. CB5

7. CBK (include construction traffic)

8. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme to maximise visibility at the entrance of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The permitted scheme shall be completed prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted and thereafter maintained. Nothing shall be planted, erected and/or allowed to grow on the land which would obstruct visibility.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to conform with the requirements of DR3 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

9. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a planning obligation pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 has been certified as completed by the local planning authority. The said Agreement will covenant with Herefordshire Council the residential units as affordable housing in accordance with the attached Heads of Terms.

Reason: In order to provide affordable housing accommodation in accordance with policies H9 and H10 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

10 CAZ

Reasons for Approval

In reaching this decision the local planning authority had regard to the need for affordable housing in the parish of Whitchurch. The site is considered a sustainable and suitable location for affordable housing with good pedestrian links to community facilities as well as the village school. Furthermore, consideration was given to the scale and form of the proposal on this part of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and considered through the use of conditions for the retention of existing landscape features minimal harm would arise. The site can be provided with a suitable safe means of access and subject to conditions will not compromise the activities associated with neighbouring fire station. Consequently, the proposal complies with policies S1, S2, S3, S7, DR1, DR2, DR3, DR5, DR13, H7, H9, H10, LA1, LA2, and LA6 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against planning policy and any other material considerations, including any representations that have been received. It has subsequently determined to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. N11C

Signed:  Dated: 17 December 2012

entrance and part of the front elevation to units 3 and 4 will be also be seen. Consequently, I do not agree that the use brick and slate would be inappropriate to this part of Whitchurch.

With regard to the impact of the proposal on the wider landscape, the Conservation Manager - Landscape Officer is concerned that the proposal will require alterations to existing ground levels in order to accommodate the proposal. Following my site visit I noted that part of the site rises notably alongside the southern boundary of the site close to the B4164. However, to ensure the development does not appear visually intrusive in the landscape it would be appropriate to require further details of finished slab levels as well as landscape details of retained hedges and trees on the site.

In order to retain the development to comply with the requirements of policy H9 the applicant has agreed to enter into a Planning Obligation that covenants with Herefordshire Council the residential units as affordable housing which must at all times be let and managed or co-owned in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Homes and Communities Agency or any successor agency. The occupants of the dwellings will also need to satisfy they are registered with Home Point at the time the affordable housing unit becomes available for residential occupation and that they have a local connection with the parishes of Whitchurch, Ganarew, Welsh Newton, Llangarron, Marstow and Goodrich.

With regard to matters of highway safety, the Traffic Manager comments that the site is close to school and visitor attraction - the butterfly centre - and has required further information with regard to traffic speeds and volume of traffic in this location. The site is located just off a roundabout at a point where traffic is slowing down as it approaches the A40 or approaching the school from the direction of the A40. The school is just to the north of the roundabout. The site is also in a restricted speed area and given the road safety concerns associated with the school traffic does not travel at high speeds. The access has good visibility in both directions for emerging vehicles and given its location close to the Fire Station and other community facilities; the school, The Court Hotel as well as butterfly centre I do not consider its use would lead to a significant increase in traffic that would not be in the interests of highway safety. In order to address local concerns a condition is proposed to secure the maximum available visibility splays.

With regard to the concerns raised by the Fire Service a scheme to provide appropriate mitigation for noise associated with operational activity is proposed in accordance with policy DR13 and condition requiring details of on site parking contractors is considered reasonable and necessary.

Reference has been made to the planning history of the site. However, the previous application for housing on this site proposed an "open market" dwelling; without justification or functional requirement. The application was refused as it represented housing in the countryside contrary to established housing policies. Given the proposal is for an identified affordable housing need the proposal; is considered to comply with policies H9 and H10.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMIT ☒ REFUSE ☐

CONDITIONS & REASONS:

(Please note any variations to standard conditions)

1. C01
2. C06
3. C13
4. CCK